

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 AF-06 AGR-05 COME-00

HEW-02 DPW-01 EB-07 DHA-02 ORM-02 SCA-01 IGA-02 PC-01

OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /163 W
----- 128072

O R 231615Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4374

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUCKCHOTT

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

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E.O 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG

SUBJ: IRC APPEALS FOR REFUGEES IN WESTERN (SPANISH) SAHARA

REF: A. RABAT 344 B. ALGIERS 139 C. STATE 14263

1. LOCAL MEDIA HAVE CARRIED BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ICRC REPORTS CONCERNING REFUGEES IN WESTERN SAHARA AND REPORTS FROM ALGIERS AND RABAT CONCERNING THE EXPULSION OF MOROCCANS FROM ALGERIA. LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS IN THE SAHARA HAVE ALSO REPORTED THAT MANY OF THE INHABITANTS OF EL AAIUN VILLA CISNEROS HAD ABANDONED THE CITY LONG BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF MOROCCANS. IN RECENT DAYS, THE LOCALPRESS HAS CARRIED PICTURES OF MOROCCAN MILITARY TRUCKS TRANSPORTING SAHARANS "FORCIBLY" BACK TO URBAN AREAS, AND WE UNDERSTAND MANY SAHARANS DID INDEED FLEE WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT SPAIN WAS DEFINITELY ABANDONING THE TERRITORY.

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WM THE MFA HAS CONFIRMED TO THE EMBASSY THAT THE SPANISH RED CROSS HAS ALSO RECEIVED THE SAME MESSAGE AS REPORTED REF C FROM THE ICRC IN GENEVA. MFA OFFICIALS SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THEY ARE WELL AWARE OF THE CONFUSED SITUATION IN THE SAHARA WITH RESPECT TO THE NUMBER OF REAL REFUGEES AND THEIR NATIONALITY. FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS, THE MFA HAS AS YET NOT MADE UP ITS MIND ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ICRC APPEAL BUT PROMISED TO INFORM THE EMBASSY OF ITS DECISION WHEN IT IS REACHED.

3. DIRGEN FOR PROMOTION OF THE SAHARA, COL. BLANCO, TOLD EMBOFF AT TIME WHEN CENSUS OF SAHARANS WAS IN PROGRESS, THAT MOST WERE NOMADS AND THAT IT WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TASK TO ASCERTAIN PRECISELY WHO WERE THE SETTLED PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORY. MANY MAY BE NOMADS, PERMANENT TRANSIENTS OF THE DESERT, BUT THE KILLING NOW GOING ON COULD WELL HAVE DISRUPTED THEIR MEANS OF EXISTENCE, THUS MAKING THEM REFUGEES IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD.

4. IN DETERMINING A RESPONSE TO THE ICRC APPEAL, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION IN THE AREA ITSELF -- COMPLICATED BY THE CONFLICTING INTERESTS OF MOROCCO, ALGERIA, AND MAURITANIA -- MAKES IT ADVISABLE FOR THE U.S. TO BE EQUITABLE IN ITS TREATMENT OF ALL GENUINE REFUGEES. UP TO THIS POINT, IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE SPANIARDS -- AND WE GATHER ALGERIANS AS WELL -- OF THE SINCERITY OF THE U.S. POLICY ON NEUTRALITY, NOT-WITHSTANDING CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS. U.S. HUMANITARIAN AID FOR GENUINE REFUGEES SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT ON THE MOST EQUITABLE BASIS POSSIBLE AND NOT LEAVE ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE EVENHANDEDNESS AND NEUTRALITY OF OUR HUMANITARIAN CONCERN. THE FACTS ABOUT WHO ARE REALLY REFUGEES AND WHO ARE NOMADS OUGHT TO BE EXPLORED IN MAKING THIS ASSESSMENT. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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